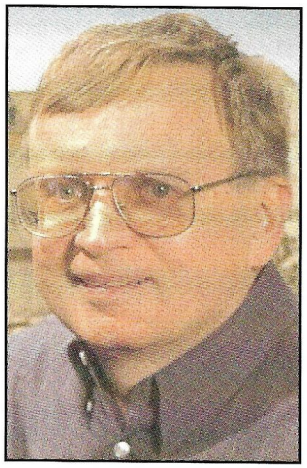
John Campbell earns MMR #301

John Campbell began model railroading, as many did, with a Lionel set. The Lionel expanded through the years and, eventually, gave way to a small HO layout, which was built to fold into the wall. After those years of getting used to alternating current, John had to stop and figure out why his first HO locomotive wouldn't run as it sat straddling the center and outside rail of the Lionel track! As a youngster, growing up in the Chicago suburb of Park Ridge meant getting to ride the Chicago North Western commuter trains into the city. And those trains were pulled by steam! A few rides on the Pennsylvania RR's Broadway Limited between Chicago and Philadelphia didn't hurt either. As a child John loved sleeping in the upper berth, waking and climbing down during the stop in Pittsburgh in the middle of the night. As the trainmen with their lamps walked back and forth outside the train, John would whip open the window shade to see all there was to see.



After college, and while in the Air Force, a trip to the hobby shop sparked an interest in N scale, relatively new at the time. The resulting 4x8' N scale layout in his apartment meant that John was back into trains. Now married with two sons and living in a real house, with a real basement, the Lionel stuff came out of hiding and got some benchwork and a few new pieces. While the Lionel set was still occupying most of the basement, HO again struck without much warning. It must have been the fact that John was living in Colorado and had seen a copy of *Narrow Gauge in the Rockies* by Lucius Beebe and Charles Clegg that got John thinking "narrow minded." A 5x11' layout was the result. That layout was operationally functional, but never quite made it to the completed stage. In order to complete a layout, John had to find another avenue.

It was during that time that John got involved with Slim Rail, a local HOn3 modular club, in Colorado Springs, Colorado. This club had a unique set of track standards, and a talented and fun group of folks. John decided to utilize all the unfinished structures from the HOn3 layout and create a 1930s mining town and railroad scene. During construction of the module, a prominent scenic form taking shape suddenly jumped out as being the silhouette of a buffalo. Of course, this had been well planned! So, that was it, the name of the town would be Buffalo Rock. Buffalo Rock eventually appeared in print in the *Narrow Gauge and Short Line Gazette*, "The Road to Buffalo Rock" (July/Aug. 1992) and more recently in *Model Railroader* (Nov. 1999). Being part of the modular Slim Rail club has been a very rewarding experience. The opportunity to regularly share model railroading with the public at convention train shows and mall shows is tremendously satisfying.

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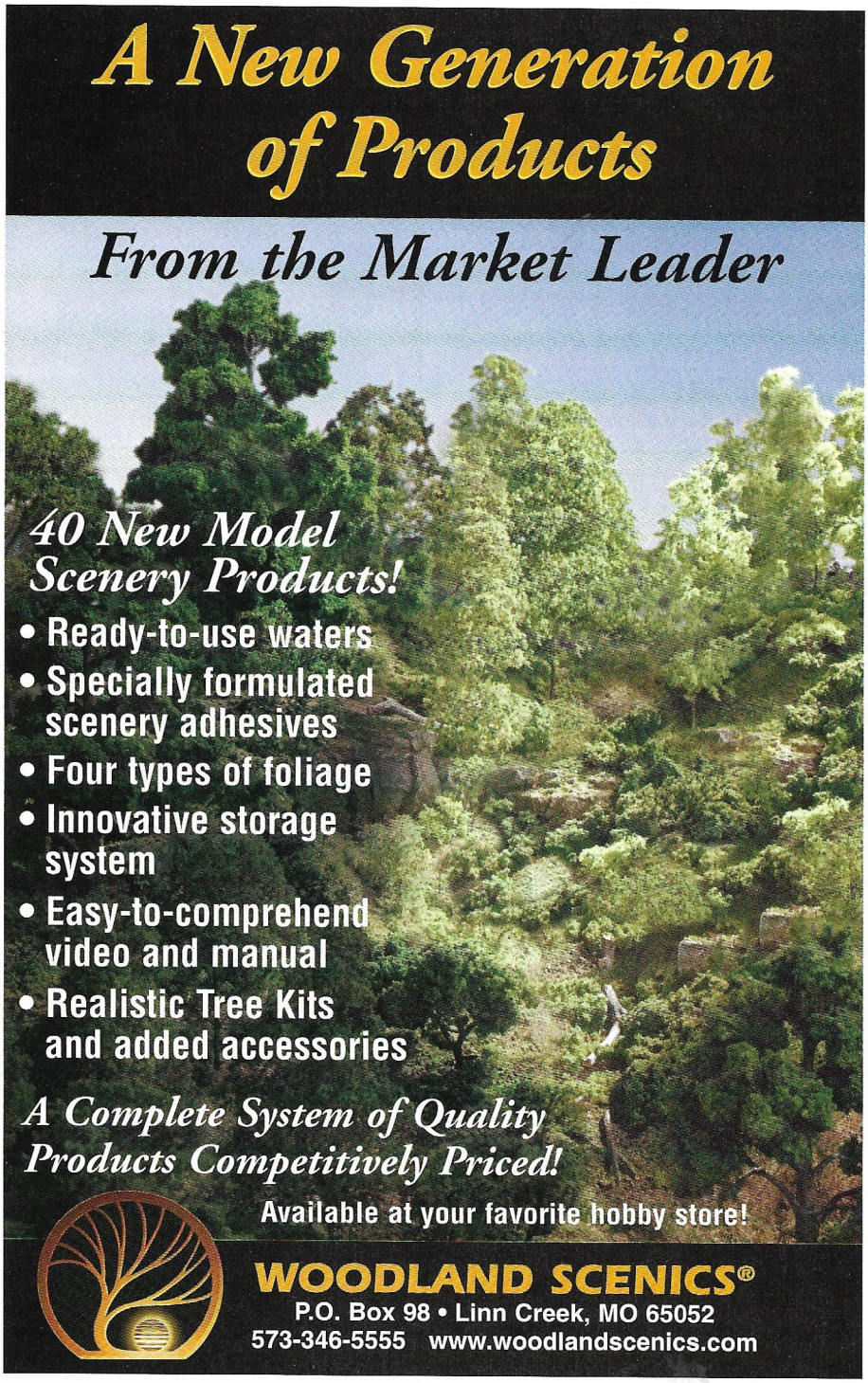
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John Campbell

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During the HOn3 years, John had built a few On3 kits and, after Buffalo rock, decided that On3 was the place to be. So John and a few other interested On3 folks started the On3 Section of Slim Rail. The group developed a unique set of standards and made a first public showing in 1994 at the Narrow Gauge Convention in Denver. John built a module called the Rattlesnake Mine. It contained forced perspective scenic elements and an animated hoist mechanism in the shaft house. This module appeared on the cover of the *Narrow Gauge and Short Line Gazette* (March/April 1998) as the first of a two-part article. The Rattlesnake Mine forms part of John's very small home layout. Plans and wall movements are still in the works for what will become the Chicago Gulch Central. Wonder where that name came from?

John lives in Monument, Colo. and is a mechanical engineer with a large electronics firm. He is in his third term as Secretary of the Rocky Mountain Region, and serves as the Superintendent of Slim Rail. In addition to the Golden Spike, John has earned Achievement certificates for Master Builder—Cars, Master Builder—Motive Power, Master Builder—Structures, Model Railroad Engineer—Civil, Model Railroad Engineer—Electrical, Model Railroad Author, and Association Official.